

PROSPECTUS

OF A

SUPPLEMENT

TO THE THIRD EDITION OF THE

ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA.

BY GEORGE GLEIG, L. L. D. AND F. R. S. EDIN.

Editor of the last Six Volumes of that Work.

NO dictionary of arts, sciences, and miscellaneous literature, has hitherto been published to which a supplement was not necessary. The reason is obvious: Every dictionary must be arranged in the order of the alphabet; and if but a very few years pass away during its progress through the press, important discoveries may be made in the interval, of which it must be impossible for the Editor to give any account without deviating entirely from the plan of the work. This has been the case in a very remarkable degree during the publication of the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA*.

SINCE the first sheets of it were given to the Public, a period of nine years has elapsed—the most eventful period in history! During which countries have been explored, to which we were formerly strangers; new principles have been introduced into some sciences, new modes of thinking adopted in the cultivation of others, new arts have been invented, and even unknown powers of nature have been discovered; and to these inventions and discoveries such names have been given, as, from the progress of the Publication, could not find a place in the series of the alphabet.

AWARE of these circumstances, many of the most enlightened purchasers of the Work have repeatedly requested from the Proprietors and the Editor a Supplementary Volume, in which the mistakes in former volumes might be corrected, and some account given of the recent discoveries of greatest importance; and they have encouraged such an undertaking by offers the most liberal.

THE Proprietors, however, though they are not insensible that, during the publication of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, circumstances have occurred which render a Supplement to it peculiarly necessary, have judged it inexpedient to comply with these requests. The reasons on which this judgment is founded concern not the Public. It is sufficient to observe here, that, as soon as they had declared their final resolution to publish no Supplement to the Third Edition, Dr Gleig, after some unsuccessful attempts to convince them of what he deemed the imprudence of such conduct, obtained from the Trustees for the family of Mr Macfarquhar the most *EXPLICIT APPROBATION* of his offering to the Public a Supplement in his own name, and in the name of any partner whom he might find it expedient to assume; and Mr Bell not only gave his *TACIT CONSENT* to the undertaking, but was even obliging enough to *RECOMMEND*

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MEND SOME ARTICLES as particularly worthy of insertion in the intended Supplement.

SUPPORTED thus by the original Proprietors, Dr Gleig has begun to collect materials for such a Supplement to the *Third Edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica* as may supply what was omitted, whether from necessity or inattention, in the conducting of that Work, and sometimes, perhaps, improve the articles which it contains; and he hopes to be able to put his Work to the press as soon as he shall have reason to look for a compensation not inadequate to his labour and to the expence of the undertaking. Of his qualifications to make it worthy of the public favour, that Public will judge from his former labours. He can promise nothing but unremitting attention on his own part, and the aid of some friends, who did him the honour to contribute to the last six volumes such articles as have obtained the most general approbation. Among these it is with pleasure and with pride that he can mention JOHN ROBISON, A. M. *Secretary to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University*, by whom all the articles in MECHANICS, MECHANICAL PHILOSOPHY, and MATHEMATICS, will be either written or revised.

DR GLEIG does not, however, suppose that the weight of any name is sufficient to induce the Public to subscribe for a large work of considerable price, without having some previous knowledge of what it is to contain. He begs leave, therefore, to subjoin a list of the PRINCIPAL subjects of which he intends to treat.

THE necessity of a Supplement appears most conspicuous in the article CHEMISTRY. Since the impression of the first volumes of the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA*, the elementary doctrines of that science have been completely changed; and yet no clear and comprehensive account of the change could be given in any subsequent volume. It was not till the article Chemistry was in the press, that the theory of Lavoisier was introduced by our celebrated and cautious philosopher into the schools of the University of Edinburgh; and therefore Mr Macfarquhar could not, without arrogating too much to himself, construct his system according to that theory. But the Editor of the Supplement flatters himself, that he shall be able to present to the Public a more complete view of the New Chemistry, as it is called, than is yet to be found perhaps in the English language.

EVERY novelty which contributes to the improvement of our manufactures must be considered as of great importance. It is therefore intended that this Supplement shall contain the descriptions of the most remarkable ENGINES, MACHINES, and MILLS, which have been invented during these last ten or twelve years. The extent to which this department will be carried must depend upon the encouragement given to the undertaking at the beginning; because the engravings necessary for the description must be expensive, that they may be useful; and must be put in hand before a single sheet can be sent to the press.

WATCH and CLOCK making may be considered as almost non-descripts in our language; and the very great change which has taken place, within the compass of thirty years, in the essential circumstances of their construction, has made the only book, which we have

on the subject, of little or no use to the artist or the gentleman. It is believed, therefore, that a treatise on this subject, containing a scientific theory, and an account of the most valuable constructions, will be very acceptable to all classes of readers.

It is likewise thought expedient to give in the Supplement a system, as it may be called, of the general doctrines of *Moving Forces*; for in the body of the Work several articles are deficient for the want of such a system, to which reference may be had for demonstration. This will be entitled *DYNAMICS*; a term very familiar to the cultivators of the Newtonian philosophy on the Continent, and coming rapidly into use among the philosophers of our own country.

BESIDES these new and important articles, it is intended that the Supplement shall contain others, not perhaps of less importance, though they must be considered as only improvements of systems already published in the Work.

THUS, the article *ASTRONOMY*, though abounding in good materials, does not present to the reader a connected and comprehensive view of the subject. This defect shall be supplied, by giving such a popular narration of the phenomena as will gradually lead the young astronomer to the discovery of the real motions of the heavenly bodies; and when the principles of Dynamics are applied to these motions, he will acquire the knowledge of the laws of nature by which the solar system is regulated. This is called *the Newtonian Philosophy*; and it shall be communicated in this article in such a manner as that it may be fully comprehended by ordinary readers.

THERE is a similar defect in the article *ELECTRICITY* as it stands in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The subject shall therefore be resumed in the Supplement, and the phenomena so arranged, as to suggest a theory which explains all the appearances of attraction and repulsion with great exactness; and gives a very satisfactory account of *THUNDER* and *LIGHTNING*. On this occasion also the curious and important appearances in the physiology of animals, which have been called *ANIMAL ELECTRICITY*, will be considered, and arranged in such a manner as must greatly conduce to our acquiring a knowledge of their nature and their origin. This may be called new matter; because no mention has been made of such appearances in any volume of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the publication having advanced too far in the alphabet before they were heard of in this country.

ON *MAGNETISM* something of importance might certainly be given, as well as on various detached branches of mechanical science not hitherto mentioned; such as the construction of *ARCHES of Stone*, and of *CENTRES* and other framings of *Carpentry*. These things loudly claim a place in a Supplement to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; but in a single volume all that is wanted cannot be contained.

THE Editor is therefore persuaded, that those who favour his undertaking will approve of his extending the Supplement to two volumes, of the same size, and printed on the same paper, and with the same type, as the other volumes of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*: for having got some name among those to whom he is known, he would be ashamed to let a Work *very defective* pass out of his hands; whilst

whilst his circumstances will not permit him to make a present of many sheets to the Public. That Public, however, may rest assured, that the Supplement shall not be extended beyond the limits mentioned.

ALTHOUGH it must be acknowledged, that in the speculations of ingenious men concerning *intellectual* and *moral* subjects, there is not room for that novelty which may be expected in the physical sciences; there is yet perhaps more wit than truth in D'Alembert's ridicule of all discoveries in *Metaphysics*, and similar branches of science. Nature does not indeed exhibit to the philosophers of our days new *phenomena*, either in the corporeal or in the intellectual world; but with respect to the former, we are daily observing some which have been hitherto unnoticed, and gradually improving our classification of others which have been long familiar to us: and why may not the same things be done with respect to the phenomena of mind? Certain it is, that professor Kant of Königsberg has acquired great celebrity by a singular view which he has published of the intellectual and moral powers of man; and that the philosophers of Germany are as zealously attached to him as ever were the naturalists to Newton, or the schoolmen to Aristotle. The KANTIAN PHILOSOPHY therefore is a subject which should not be omitted in an Encyclopædia; and Dr Gleig will endeavour to gratify his readers with a short view of it in the proposed Supplement.

In that Supplement nothing shall be omitted for which room can be found, and which is related to science, to literature, to commerce, or to useful and elegant arts. To complete such a plan will indeed be impossible without much labour and great expence. Of the former volumes the materials of the second edition constituted the basis; but of the Supplement almost every article must be original composition. When this circumstance, together with the high duty on paper, is duly considered, the Editor persuades himself, that no man inclined to favour his undertaking will be surprised at his estimating the half volume, in boards, at *twelve shillings and sixpence*, instead of *ten and sixpence*. Its price, however, shall not be enhanced, nor its bulk swelled, by disquisitions on trifling subjects; by the lives of obscure individuals; or by the description of insignificant villages: but as many things, far from trifling, may have escaped the notice of the Editor and his friends, they will consider themselves as indebted to any correspondent who shall point out to them what is of real and general importance: and letters to that purpose (*Post paid*), addressed either to the Reverend Dr GLEIG at *Stirling*, or to JOHN BROWN Printer, Anchor Close, *Edinburgh*, will be received with gratitude, and considered with attention.

N. B. *The Trade in London, and throughout the South of England, will be pleased to subscribe for the number which they mean to purchase, to Mr NICOL, BOOKSELLER TO HIS MAJESTY;—those in the North of England, and throughout Scotland, to JOHN BROWN Printer, Anchor Close, Edinburgh; and private individuals, who purchase but one or two Copies, to their own Booksellers,*